

Application No. 10/687,191

PATENT
Docket No. 58085-010201**REMARKS**

Claims 1-16 and 19-27 are pending in the application.

Claims 1-6 have been amended.

Claim 18 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claim 19-27 have been newly added and present no new matter. In addition, Claims 19-27 are well supported in the specification.

Reconsideration of the rejections and objections set forth in the Office Action dated October 19, 2005 is respectfully requested.

Priority

Applicants submit that, as amended, Claims 1, 4, and 19 are well supported under 35 U.S.C § 112 in the parent application No. 09/617,721, filed July 17, 2000. Therefore, the effective filing date of at least the subject matter of Claims 1, 4, and 19 is the filing date of the parent application, namely July 17, 2000.

Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1-16 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Grimm et al., U.S. Patent No. 2002/0116235, in view of Croughwell et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,966,654. For at least the following reasons, Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Grimm et al. has a filing date of February 7, 2002, and further claims the benefit of provisional application No. 60/267126, filed, February 2, 2001. As stated above, independent Claims 1, 4, and 19 have an effective filing date of July 17, 2000. As such, the effective filing date of Claims 1, 4, and 19 (July 17, 2000) predates both of the Grimm et al. filing dates (February 7, 2002 and February 2, 2001). Therefore, Grimm et al. cannot be used to render

Application No. 10/687,191

PATENT
Docket No. 58085-010201

subject matter of Claims 1, 4, and 19 obvious because one of ordinary skill in the art would not have had the knowledge of Grimm et al. at the time the invention was made.

Accordingly, Grimm et al. in view of Croughwell et al. do not render Claims 1, and 4 obvious. Claims 2, 3, and 5-16 depend from Claims 1 and 4. Therefore, Claims 2, 3, and 5-16 are not rendered obvious by Grimm et al. in view of Croughwell et al. either. Applicants respectfully request that rejections to Claims 1 and 16 be withdrawn.

New Claims

Applicants have introduced new Claims 19-27. All of the elements of Claims 19-27 are well supported in the original as-filed application and do not present new matter.

For the same reasons explained as above regarding Claims 1 and 4, Applicants submit that Claim 19 is patentable over Grimm et al. in view of Croughwell et al. Furthermore, Claims 20-23 depend on Claim 19, Claims 24-25 depend on Claim 1, and Claims 25-27 depend on Claim 4. Accordingly, Applicants submit that Claims 20-27 are also patentable over Grimm et al. in view of Croughwell et al.

Conclusion

Applicants have complied with all requirements made in the above referenced communication and submit that the claims are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. Should matters remain, which the Examiner believes could be resolved in a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to telephone the Applicants' undersigned agent.

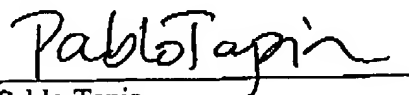
Application No. 10/687,191

PATENT
Docket No. 58085-010201

The Director is authorized to charge any additional fee(s) or any underpayment of fee(s), or to credit any overpayments to Deposit Account Number 50-2638. Please ensure that Attorney Docket Number 58085-010201 is referred to when charging any payments or credits for this case.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: December 19, 2005


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